Writing Effective Emails Quick Reference

5 elements of email

Audience

Know the answers to these 3 questions:

- Who is my audience?
- What do they need to know?
- What action do I want them to take?

To:	Cc and Bcc:
○ Limit your recipients. ○ Check to make sure it is the right person.	○ Need to know basis. ○ Choose wisely.

Subject Line

- Ensure they are meaningful. Make your words count.
- Avoid vague or empty subject lines.
- Provide an opportunity for your reader to scan their inbox.
- Prep your reader for what comes next.

Salutation/Introduction

If	Then	Example
You know your recipient.	No formal introduction is necessary. Use their first name.	Hi Michelle:
You don‟t know the reader well or the relationship is formal.	Use a title and a last name. Otherwise, use the first name.	Dear Ms. Brown: Dear Gail:
You are writing to two people.	Use both names.	Dear Mr. Jones and Ms. Smith: Dear Alex and Diane:
You are writing to a group.	No names are necessary. Categorize the group.	Dear managers: Hi everyone:
You don‟t know a person‟s gender.	Use their full name rather than a title.	Dear Dana Simms: Dear B.J. Black:
You are responding to an email.	It is not necessary to use a salutation.	

Body/Content

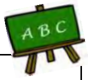
Do	Don't
Be concise and get to the point as quickly as possible.	Mix topics, projects, or ideas.
Use bullets/numbers.	Leave out important details. (due date, meeting time, reply date, etc.)
Use standard capitalization and spelling.	Use acronyms or jargon your reader won‟t understand.
Send to the right people.	Insert attachments… unless your recipient needs to view the full file in order to edit or archive it, then of course sending an attachment is appropriate.

Closing

Use an auto signature that consists of the following:

- Your name
- Your title
- Your agency name
- Address (if needed)
- Phone and fax number

Allow your recipient to pick up the phone and call.
Use disclaimer to protect you from liability.



A	Action	What action do I want from my reader. Use verbs such as read, review, respond, and reply.
B	Background	What is the background of this request. Who wants me to do it and why.
C	Closure	When does your reader need to respond and who do they respond to.

Sample Email Subject Lines

Good	Bad
Your April Website Statistics	Web Stats
Important Travel Info.	Travel
FYI – Tina promoted!	Tina
News – Our webpage launched!	Help Spread the News!
DPRT – Due 6/24 – FTB XXXX	Review Form
Agenda – Staff Meeting 6/16	Meeting Agenda
655 confirmed for Thurs. Webinar	Training Registrants

Quick Email Prefixes

Action:	NNR:
Agenda:	Personal:
Decision:	Procedures:
EOM: (suffix)	Question:
Follow-Up:	Reminder:
FYI:	Request:
Help:	Response Needed:
Instructions:	Schedule:
Kudos:	Sharing:
Meeting:	Update
Minutes:	Urgent:

Top 10 Tips

1. Follow your agency/department policies and procedures.
2. Choose your recipients wisely.
3. Avoid fancy typefaces, quotes, or emoticons. No flash or bling necessary.
4. Avoid net lingo and acronyms.
5. Pick up the phone! Email may not be the best medium.
6. A reminder never hurts. If your recipient hasn‟t responded, ping „em again.
7. Never send mixed messages. One idea per message.
8. Prevent email overload - Do not reply with a “thanks!”
9. Respond promptly and accurately.
10. Do not use all uppercase in emails.